

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving task data indicating a plurality of tasks, each task comprising a customer contact, and agent data indicating a plurality of agents;

storing the task data and the agent data in a database system; and

assigning respective tasks of the plurality of tasks to at least one of the agents according to workflows, wherein the receiving of the agent data includes receiving status messages from the plurality of agents, each status message providing agent availability data;

determining a system overloaded condition and

reassigning a first agent from a first task currently being ~~performed~~ handled by the first agent by interrupting the first agent and instructing the first agent to abandon the task currently being handled and switching the first agent to a second task responsive to the determining the system overloaded condition.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the receiving comprises:

receiving the task data from a plurality of sources and reassigning comprises instructing the first agent to abandon handling emails and switch to handling telephone calls.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 2 wherein the plurality of sources comprise heterogeneous media switches.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein each of the heterogeneous media switches is from a group consisting of electronic mail systems, internet live text systems, internet

voice transmission systems, telephonic voice systems, telephonic facsimile systems, and voice mail systems.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the status messages designate either busy or available.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the agent availability data comprises anyone of the group including whether the agent is busy, is available, accepts a first type of task, declines a second type of task, and accepts a task responsive to the system overloaded condition.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 8 wherein the system overloaded condition is workflow defined and wherein reassigning comprises interrupting the first agent requesting that the first agent abandon the first task currently being handled by the first agent and take up handling the second task.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein the database system comprises:

at least one volatile memory database and at least one writable medium database which are synchronized with each other.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 10 wherein ~~the volatile memory database and the writable medium database are~~ synchronized status of at least one agent is changed to available from one of unavailable and available-if-needed in response to system load exceeding a predetermined system load threshold.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the assigning comprises:

- executing a task queued work flow responsive to receiving the task data; and
- executing an agent availability workflow responsive to receiving the agent data.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 13 wherein the executing of the task queued work flow comprises:

- storing the task data as a task entry in the database system;
- identifying the first agent of the plurality of agents to handle the first task of the plurality of tasks; and
- assigning the first agent the first task.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14 wherein the identifying comprises:

- searching the database system for an agent entry meeting defined criteria.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15 wherein the assigning comprises:

- notifying the first agent to handle the first task; and
- receiving a response from the first agent either accepting or declining the first task; and
- if the first agent accepts the first task, updating the database system.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 16 wherein the updating of the database system comprises:

modifying the task entry and the agent entry.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 13 wherein the executing of the agent availability workflow comprises:

storing the agent data as an agent entry in the database system;

identifying the first task of the plurality of tasks to be handled by the first agent of the plurality of agents; and

assigning the first task to the first agent.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18 wherein the identifying comprises;

searching the database system for a task entry meeting defined criteria.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein the assigning comprises:

notifying the first agent to handle the first task; and

receiving a response from the first agent either accepting or declining the first task; and

if the first agent accepts the first task, updating the database system.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 20 wherein the updating of the database system comprises;

modifying the task entry and the agent entry.

22. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a blending engine coupled to a plurality of media switches such that the blending engine receives task data from the plurality of media switches;

a plurality of agent workstations coupled to the blending engine such that the agent workstation provide agent data to the blending engine, and the blending engine provides a plurality of task assignments to the agent workstations;

a blending database coupled to the blending engine such that the blending engine and the blending database exchange the agent data and the task data; and

a workflow manager coupled to the blending database and the blending engine such that the workflow manager:

accesses the blending database,  
executes workflows,

communicates the plurality of task assignments to the blending engine, wherein the blending engine receives status messages from the plurality of agents, each status message providing agent availability data;

determines a system overloaded condition, and

reassigns a first agent from a first task currently being handled by the first agent by interrupting the first agent and instructing the first agent to abandon the task currently being handled and switching the first agent to a second task responsive to the system overloaded condition.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 22 wherein each media switch comprises:

an adapter coupled to a media specific queue;

and

each media specific queue is coupled to the blending engine.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 22 wherein each media switch provides at least one connection to one of a group comprising:

an electronic mail system, an internet live text system, an internet voice transmission system, a telephonic voice system, a telephonic facsimile system, and a voice mail system.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 22 wherein each agent workstation comprises:

a desktop helper; and

each desktop helper is coupled to the blending engine via a blending engine queue.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 22 wherein the blending database comprises at least one volatile memory database synchronized with at least one writable medium database.

28. (Original) The system of Claim 27 wherein the blending database stores a plurality of task entries and a plurality of agent entries.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 28 wherein the volatile memory database is a superset of the writable medium database.

30. (Original) The system of Claim 28 wherein the volatile memory database stores a blending engine queue data and a plurality of media specific queue data.

31. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 28, wherein to accesses the blending database comprises:

reading the task entries and the agent entries.

32. (Currently Amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon instructions which when executed by a processor cause the machine to perform operations comprising:

receiving task data indicating a plurality of tasks, each task comprising a customer contact, and agent data indicating a plurality of agents;

storing the task data and the agent data in a database system;

assigning respective tasks of the plurality of tasks to at least one of the agents;

determining a system overloaded condition; and

reassigning a first agent from a first task currently being handled by the first agent by interrupting the first agent and instructing the first agent to abandon the task currently being handled and switching the first agent to a second task responsive to the determining the system overloaded condition, the receiving of the agent data including receiving status messages from the plurality of agents, each status message provides agent availability data.

33. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 32 wherein the receiving of the task data comprises:

receiving the task data from a plurality of sources.

34. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 33 wherein the plurality of sources comprise heterogeneous media switches.

35. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 34 wherein each of the heterogeneous media switches is from a group consisting of electronic mail systems, internet live text systems, internet voice transmission systems, telephonic voice systems, telephonic facsimile systems, and voice mail systems.

36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 32 wherein the reassigning comprises interrupting performance of the first task by the first agent and switching the first agent to performing the second task.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 32 wherein the agent availability data comprises any one of the group including whether the agent is busy, available, accepts a first type of task, declines a second type of task, and accepts a task responsive to a system overloaded condition.

40. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 39 wherein the system overloaded condition is workflow defined.

41. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 32 wherein the database system comprises:

at least one volatile memory database and at least one writable medium database.

42. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 41 wherein the volatile memory database and the writable medium database are synchronized.



43. (Canceled)

44. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 42 wherein the assigning comprises:

- executing a task queued work flow responsive to receiving the task data; and
- executing an agent availability workflow responsive to receiving the agent data.

45. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 44 wherein the executing a task queued work flow comprises;

- storing the task data as a task entry in the database system;
- identifying the first agent of the agents to handle the first task of the plurality of task; and
- assigning the first agent the first task.

46. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 45 wherein the identifying comprises:

- searching the database system for an agent entry meeting defined criteria.

47. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 46 wherein the assigning comprises:

- notifying the first agent to handle the first task; and
- receiving a response from the first agent either accepting or declining the first task; and
- if the first agent accepts the first task, updating the database system.

48. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 47 wherein the updating the database system comprises:

- modifying the task entry and the agent entry.

49. (Previously Presented) The machine readable medium of Claim 44 wherein the executing an agent availability workflow comprises:

- storing the agent data as an agent entry in the database system;
- identifying the first task of the plurality of tasks to be handled by the first agent of the plurality of agents; and
- assigning the first task to the first agent.

50. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 49 wherein the identifying comprises;

- searching the database system for a task entry meeting defined criteria.

51. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 50 wherein the assigning comprises:

- notifying the first agent to handle the first task; and
- receiving a response from the first agent either accepting or declining the first task; and
- if the first agent accepts the first task, updating the database system.

52. (Original) The machine readable medium of Claim 51 wherein the updating the database system comprises:

- modifying the task entry and the agent entry.

53. (Previously Presented) The method Claim 1 wherein the reassigning comprises:

- requesting the first agent to abandon the first task for the second task;

receiving a response from the first agent either accepting or declining the second task.

and

if the first agent accepts the second task, assigning the second task to the first agent.

54. (Previously Presented) The method Claim 1 wherein the reassigning comprises:

instructing the first agent to abandon the first task for the second task; and

assigning the second task to the first agent.

55. (Previously Presented) The method Claim 54 wherein the first task is responding to a received email and the second task is processing a current call.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the determining the system overloaded condition includes determining whether the volume of tasks has exceeded a predetermined level.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15 wherein the defined criteria includes any one of the group including elapsed time since a previous task was performed, a skill level in a business area, a skill level in a product area, a proficiency in a media, a fluency in a language, elapsed time since beginning work, elapsed time since taking a break.